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SOURCE Neue Zuercher Zeitung, No 2504, 1949.

EAST GERMAN GOVERNMENT ORDERS
QUALITY OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS IMPROVED

The East German government has issued a decree ordering the improvement of industrial products.

Since 1945, the emphasis has been on increasing the amount of production, often at the expense of quality. Consumers' goods for domestic consumption fell short of even the most modest expectations. As for export, many commercial transactions could not be negotiated because the goods offered did not meet international standards.

The Russian-licensed press has been preparing the public for the new measures. Some time ago, a series of detailed reports dealing with the lacks and abuses in people-owned enterprises appeared in Taegliche Rundschau, official organ of the Soviet Administration, and in the Socialist Unity Party press, mentioning certain plants and managers by name.

The Astra Adding and Bookkeeping Machine Factory in Chemnitz complained of poor deliveries of materials and equipment. For example, 38 percent of the motors ordered from outside sources could not be used, and one third of a shipment of screws had to be returned to the manufacturers in Luckenwalde. A member of the Miles Machine Shop in Sigmarsdorf complained that crooked rolled steel billets have to be used in the production of lathe shafts, and also that the quality of the cast parts supplied varies greatly. Frequently, delivery dates are not met. The threads of the screws do not conform to prescribed standards, and the screw shafts, heads, and fronts are dirty and full of burrs.

To avoid loss of time through installation and removal of defective motors, it was necessary to construct a special test stand.

The manufacturers of semifinished materials have tried to justify themselves when confronted with their customers' complaints. The people-owned steel plant at Hennigsdorf, promising improvements, ascribes its failures to insufficient equipment. It has finally managed to set up a physical laboratory of limited adequacy, but two items of major importance, a tensile-testing machine and a microscope, are still lacking. Failure to obtain proper wire-straightening and cutting machinery constitutes the most serious hardship. Direct appeals to the government, or rather to the competent Ministry, have not even received the courtesy of a reply.

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To provide the workers with an incentive for more painstaking performance, quality brigades have been created to raise the standard as well as increase production. Stressing this, the Socialist Unity Party (SED) held the 1949 assembly of people-owned enterprises at Leipzig at the end of December under the slogan, "Quality Performance." A resolution adopted by the assembly obliges the firms to conform with the measures contained in the above-mentioned decree, i.e., classification of goods produced according to quality groups and with a proportionate price scale.

Under this system, factories whose output does not conform to the required standard of quality must submit to a reduction of proceeds from sales. The worker, likewise, will suffer a reduction of income if his performance does not meet the prescribed standards. In the future, determination of wages will be subject to consideration of the quality, performance, and quantity of goods produced. Outstanding work, on the other hand, will be rewarded with premiums in cash and commodities, as well as free vacation trips. In the future, the bestowal of the activist award will depend on the attainment of a given standard of quality, as well as a given production figure.

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